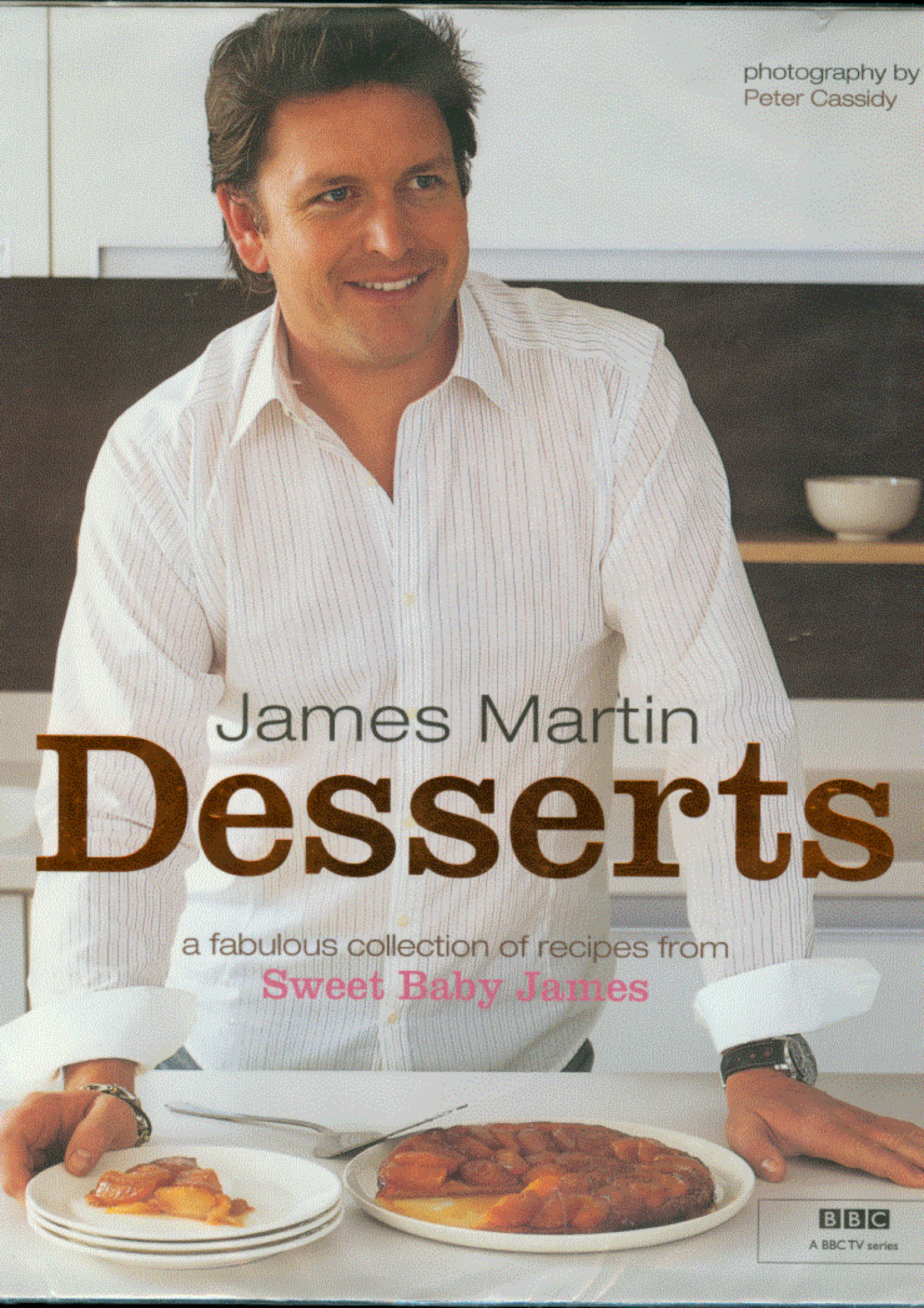


photography by
Peter Cassidy

James Martin

Desserts

a fabulous collection of recipes from
Sweet Baby James

BBC
A BBC TV series

Everywhere I go in Britain, people ask me when I'm going to write a book on desserts. With the great support of Elaine Bedell and Roly Keating of BBC 2, I have a fantastic new series on desserts and the book you keep asking me for. Thanks to Jane Lush, Fenia Vardinas, Emma Robertson, David Vallance, Steve Moss and Andy Muggleton at Splash Media. My excellent assistant on the series, Will Torrent, has provided brilliant support throughout and is a talent to look out for! Huge thanks also to Lisa Harrison, Chris Start and Pippa Bull – I hope they haven't piled on too many pounds during the creation of this book! No worries, guys – the treadmills are on order! Jane O'Shea, Helen Lewis, Gillian Haslam and Gabriella Le Grazie of Quadrille must also be applauded for their tireless support and efforts that went in making this book happen. Denby, Stellar and Wahl provided the equipment for the series – cheers, guys! Thanks also to Barbara Prince and her team at Aston Martin. As ever, I want to say a big thank you to my agency, Limelight Management, who have been there for me when I needed them (and when I didn't!): Fiona Lindsay, Linda Shanks, Mary Bekhait and Alison Lindsay. Last, but not least, I want to say a big thank you to the photographer, Peter Cassidy, and his assistant Colin, for the stonking photographs.

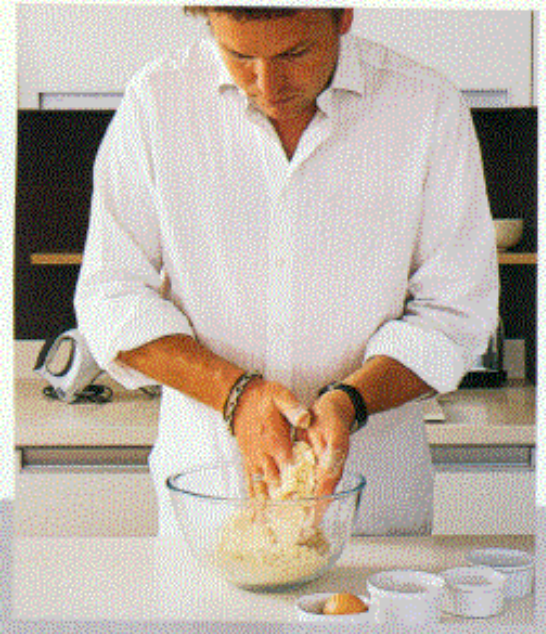
For further information, visit www.jamesmartinchef.co.uk

Rich shortcrust pastry

1 Mix together the flour and salt (and icing sugar if making sweet pastry). Add half the cubed butter to the flour. Gently and swiftly, rub the fat into the flour until it resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Add the rest of the butter and mix until it's the size of small peas. Make a well in the centre of the dry ingredients.

2 Mix the egg with the lemon juice and water and gradually pour into the well a little at a time, rubbing it through your fingers, until it forms a dough (you may not need all the liquid). Turn out onto a floured board and knead lightly until smooth. Shape into a ball, wrap in clingfilm and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

3 To line a tin or mould, roll the chilled pastry onto the rolling pin, then unroll over the tin, draping the pastry into the tin or mould. Gently press it in place using your fingers.



MAKES 3000

200g plain flour

¼ tsp salt

2 tbsp icing sugar (if making sweet pastry)

100g cold unsalted butter, cubed

1 egg, beaten

1 tsp lemon juice

2 tbsp iced water

The best way to make shortcrust with that crumble-in-the-mouth texture is to do it by hand rather then by machine, as a blender will overwork the gluten in the flour and cause the pastry to be springy and shrink when cooked. In addition, resting the pastry in the fridge is important, as the high proportion of butter to flour makes it difficult to roll out when warm. Any unused pastry can be frozen (freeze it rolled into a tin, rather than in a ball).

Simple rough puff pastry

1 Mix together the flour and salt. Cut the butter into small cubes (this is where the recipe differs from flaky pastry – see page 18) and mix the butter into the flour without breaking up the lumps. Mix to a stiff dough with 100ml cold water and the lemon juice.

2 On a floured board, roll the dough into a rectangle three times as long as it is wide – about 30 x 10cm.

3 Fold the top third down and bottom third up. Turn the pastry sideways and seal the edges. Continue to roll and fold four times, leaving the pastry to rest for 15 minutes between each folding and rolling. Wrap in clingfilm and leave to rest and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes before using.

MAKES 350G

200g plain flour

½ tsp salt

150g butter

1 tsp lemon juice

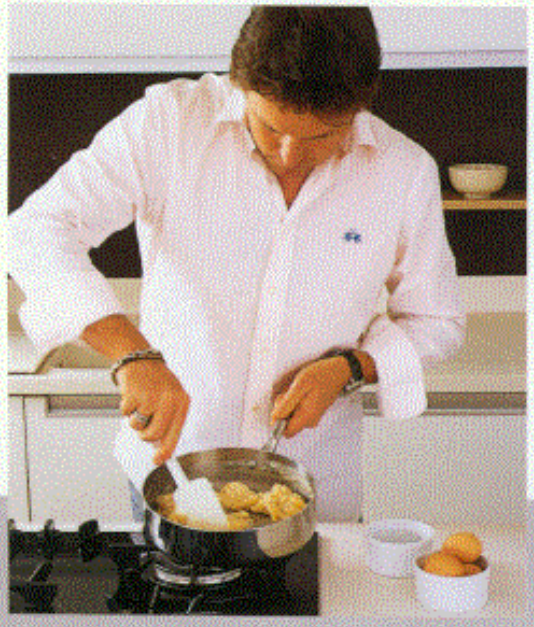
Until ready-made all-butter puff pastry is more widely available in the shops, this is the recipe you need for great-tasting puff pastry.

Choux pastry

1 Pre-heat the oven to 220°C/425°F/ Gas mark 7. Put 125ml water, the milk, diced butter, salt and caster sugar in a saucepan set over a high heat and boil for 1 minute, stirring with a spatula. Turn off the heat and, stirring all the time, quickly add the flour until the mixture is very smooth.

2 When the mixture is smooth, replace the pan over the heat and stir with the spatula for 1 minute. The paste will begin to poach and some of the water will evaporate. Don't let the paste dry out too much, or it will crack during cooking. Immediately add the eggs off the heat, one at a time, mixing in with a spatula.

3 Stir well with the spatula until the eggs are thoroughly combined and the paste has a very smooth texture. It is now ready to use.



MAKES 24 PROFITEROLES OR 16 ECLAIRS

125ml milk

100g butter, cut into small pieces

3g fine salt

5g caster sugar

150g flour, sifted

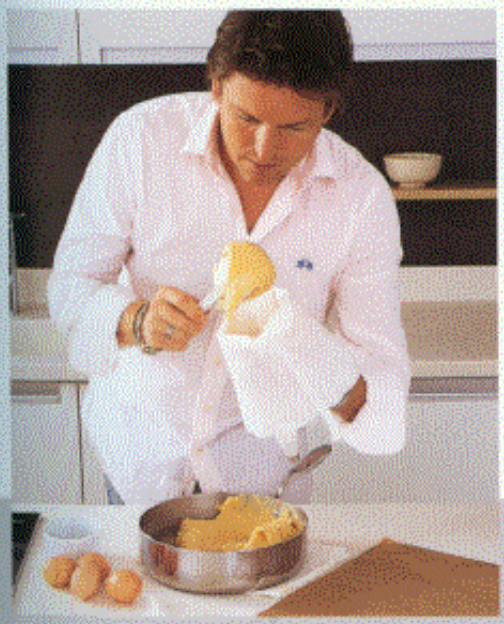
4 medium eggs

There are two golden rules when making choux pastry. The first is the method – you need to cook the flour for about a minute until you can hear a slight popping sound in the pan, then allow to cool before adding the eggs. The second concerns baking the pastry – place a baking tray in the bottom of the oven and just before closing the oven door, throw half a cup of water into the bottom of the oven.

4 Carefully spoon the mixture into a large piping bag fitted with a plain 1cm nozzle.

5 Pipe out the paste onto baking parchment or a greased baking tray. Smooth down any bumps on the piped pastry with a finger dipped in water. Pipe small buns if making profiteroles or longer shapes for eclairs.

6 Place the baking tray in the oven, then throw half a cup of water onto the oven floor to create some steam. Bake in the oven, opening the oven door slightly (about 1–2cm) after 5 minutes and leave it ajar. Cooking time will vary from 10–20 minutes, depending on the size of the buns or eclairs.



This will create steam to start the rising of the choux. However, too much steam will cause the choux to collapse, so open the oven door for a few seconds about 5 minutes into the cooking time to allow some steam to disperse.

Old-fashioned flaky pastry

This is a really simple method for making flaky pastry, and if you make a bit more than you need, it freezes really well. It tastes far better than the bought-in stuff. The use of lard adds an old-fashioned taste to the pastry, which is great for topping savoury pies and traditional desserts to give that 'just-as-granny-used-to-make' taste.

MAKES ABOUT 470G

200g plain flour

¼ tsp salt

75g butter, softened

75g lard, softened

1 Sieve the flour and salt into a large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together the butter and lard and divide into four equal portions. Rub one of these portions into the flour and mix to a soft dough with 150ml water.

2 Roll this pastry into a rectangle three times as long as it is wide, measuring 30 x 10cm. Dot another quarter of the fat over the top two-thirds of the rolled-out pastry. Fold the bottom third up and the top third down. Turn the dough sideways. Press down the edges of the pastry to seal the fat inside. Roll out again and leave the pastry to rest in the fridge for 10 minutes

3 Repeat this procedure until all the fat is used up, resting the pastry for 5 minutes between each turn. Wrap in clingfilm and leave to chill in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.

4 When ready to use, roll out on a lightly floured surface (not too much flour as this will toughen up the pastry) to a thickness of 3mm. If the pastry starts to warm up and become sticky at any time, wrap it in clingfilm and chill for about 15 minutes before continuing.

Cinder toffee honeycomb

1 Place the sugar, honey and glucose in a heavy-based pan with 100ml water. Place the pan on the heat and, using a sugar thermometer, bring to the boil and boil to 160°C/325°F (a light caramel).

2 Grease a large baking tray with oil while the sugar is boiling. When the pan reaches the required temperature, remove from the heat, quickly add the bicarb and whisk in speedily.

3 Working quickly, pour the mixture onto the tray – it will start to bubble up quite dramatically straight away. Leave to cool. When cold, break up and mix with ice cream, or to make hokey pokey, dice into chunks and coat in dark chocolate.

400g caster sugar

100ml runny honey

2 tbsp liquid glucose

oil, for greasing

1½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

200g dark chocolate, melted (optional)

Cinder toffee (also called honeycomb) is the stuff you've probably always wanted to know how to make. The secret is to work quickly once the bicarb has been whisked in. It's great scattered over ice cream or broken into pieces and coated in chocolate, which I would call hokey pokey.

Sticky gingerbread pudding

This basic recipe also works well if you use other spices such as cinnamon or nutmeg in place of the ginger.

SERVES 6

140g stem ginger in syrup (8 pieces)
175g self-raising flour
1 level tsp ground ginger
½ level tsp ground cinnamon
½ level tsp ground cloves
1 level tsp baking powder
1 level tsp bicarbonate of soda
2 eggs
75g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
110g molasses sugar
1 tbsp black treacle
1 heaped tsp freshly grated ginger
175g Bramley apples, peeled, cored and chopped small

1 Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Grease six 175ml ovenproof pudding basins.

2 Place the pieces of stem ginger in a food processor and turn on the motor for about 7–10 seconds. Be careful not to process for too long – the ginger should be chopped small, but not puréed.

3 Sift the flour, spices, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda into a mixing bowl. Then add the eggs, butter, sugar and treacle. The best way to measure treacle is to grease the spoon first and, using a spatula or another spoon, push it into the bowl to join the rest of the ingredients.

4 Add the freshly grated ginger, then, using an electric hand whisk, whisk everything together gradually, adding 150–175ml warm water until you have a smooth mixture. Finally, fold in the stem ginger and apple.

5 Divide the mixture between the buttered pudding basins, filling them three-quarters full. Stand them on a solid baking sheet and bake in the centre of the oven for 35 minutes, or until they feel firm and springy to the touch.

6 Remove them from the oven and let them stand for about 5 minutes, then run a small palette knife around the edges of the tins and turn them out.

7 Allow the puddings to get completely cold and keep them wrapped in clingfilm until you need them. To reheat, microwave for 1 minute or warm in the oven at 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4 for 5 minutes.

Croissant butter pudding

I don't really like the term 'trademark dish', but this is probably the recipe I owe most of my career to. It was the dish that got me noticed at Antony Worrall Thompson's restaurant where it was invented out of necessity – instead of ordering three dozen croissants, 33 dozen were delivered. As a 17-year-old pastry chef, I had to find a way to use them up. It's also the dish that got me spotted in television and led to my first head-chef job when I was 21. The secret is not to over-cook the pudding. It should be quite liquid in the centre because it uses whole eggs and extra egg yolks. It must be made on the day – never place it in the fridge otherwise it will have to be sliced rather than spooned.

SERVES 4

500ml milk
500ml double cream
1 vanilla pod
3 whole eggs
6 egg yolks
200g caster sugar
6 large croissants
25g sultanas
25g butter, melted
175g white chocolate, cut into shards
75ml whisky
icing sugar, for dusting

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4.

Pour the milk and cream into a pan, add the vanilla pod, and gradually bring to the boil.

Place the eggs, egg yolks and sugar in a food mixer bowl and mix gently using the whisk attachment on a low setting.

While the cream is heating, slice the croissants and place in an ovenproof dish, slightly overlapping the pieces. Sprinkle with sultanas and pour over the butter.

Once the cream has boiled, take it off the heat. Add the egg mixture and chocolate and stir well. Place to one side off the heat to allow the chocolate to melt, stirring occasionally.

Add the whisky to the cream mixture. Using a sieve, strain the cream over the croissants and bake in the oven for 20–25 minutes or until almost set.

Remove from the oven and dust with icing sugar. Caramelize the topping using a very hot grill or, if you have one, a blowtorch. This is best served at room temperature, with a spoonful of ice cream.

Apple and blueberry pie

The combination of apple and blueberries makes a wonderful, slightly sharp pie filling. Make sure the apples are not overcooked – if they are cooked for too long in the pan, by the time you place them in the pie and cook them again you will end up with a fine purée. Aim for delicate chunks of soft apple so that the pie filling has some texture. If you would prefer to make one large pie, use a 22cm pie dish and cook for 25–30 minutes.

SERVES 6

- 450g shortcrust pastry (see page 14)
- flour, for dusting
- 550g cooking apples, such as Bramleys
- 100g caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
- finely grated zest and juice of ½ a lemon
- 150g blueberries
- 25g butter
- 1 egg, beaten
- clotted cream or ice cream, for serving

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6. Grease six 7.5cm dariole moulds.

Roll out two-thirds of the pastry on a floured work surface and cut out circles slightly larger than the moulds. Line the greased moulds with pastry.

Peel, quarter and core the apples, then slice them thickly into a bowl with three-quarters of the sugar, the lemon juice and zest. Stir gently to mix.

Heat a pan and add the apples with the butter and remaining sugar. Cook for 3–4 minutes, then add the blueberries. Cook for a few more minutes, then remove from the heat and cool.

When cool, fill the pastry-lined moulds with the filling.

Roll out the remaining pastry approximately 1cm larger than the moulds and place it on top of the filling. Seal the edges well and then make a small hole in the top to allow the steam to escape.

Make decorations from any pastry trimmings (I like to make a few leaves) and seal them with a little water. Brush the tops of the pies with beaten egg, then dust with caster sugar. Bake for 15 minutes until the fruit is tender and the top is golden brown. Serve hot with clotted cream or ice cream.

Steamed treacle sponge pudding

I collect old English cookbooks dating from the eighteenth century. You can't pick one of them up without looking at the dessert chapter where you will find plenty of steamed sponge puddings – in particular this idea which I class as a 'proper pudding'. This simple dish can be left steaming for several hours. You can also make it in advance and place it in the fridge, then re-steam it or re-heat in the microwave. The most important thing with this dessert is to use really good-quality treacle and proper butter – you'll never get the same flavour using margarine.

SERVES 6–8

3 tbsp golden syrup, plus 3-4 tbsp extra to serve
175g self-raising flour
1 rounded tsp baking powder
175g very soft butter
3 large eggs
175g soft light brown sugar
1 tbsp black treacle

Butter a 1.2 litre pudding basin well. Cut a double thickness of kitchen foil measuring approximately 30 x 40cm.

Grease a tablespoon and measure the 3 tbsp golden syrup into the pudding basin.

Sift the flour and baking powder into large mixing bowl and add the soft butter, eggs, sugar and black treacle. Using an electric hand whisk (or a large fork and a lot of elbow grease), beat the mixture for about 2 minutes or until it has thoroughly blended. Spoon the mixture into the basin and use the back of a spoon to level the top.

Cover the basin with the foil, making a pleat in the centre. Pull the foil down the outside of the basin and tie in place around the rim with string, taking the string over the top and tying it on the other side to make a handle for easy lifting. Trim off the excess foil all the way around.

Place the pudding in a steamer fitted over a saucepan of boiling water and steam the pudding for 2 hours, checking the water level halfway through.

To serve, loosen the pudding all around using a palette knife, invert it onto a warmed plate and pour the extra syrup over the top before taking it to the table. Serve with custard or ice cream.

Fresh orange curd pudding

I love this pudding as it's so simple. If you ever visit a Japanese food store, try to pick up a yuzu – it's a sour Japanese citrus fruit. Yuzu has a mandarin flavour and a tart sharpness like grapefruit. Add a little into this pud instead of the lemon zest and juice for an even better flavour.

SERVES 4–6

300ml fresh orange juice
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
60g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
90g caster sugar
4 large eggs, separated
70g self-raising flour
½ tsp baking powder
160ml milk
icing sugar, for dusting

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Butter the sides of a 1-litre soufflé dish, or other similar ovenproof dish, and set aside.

Put the orange and lemon juices in a saucepan, bring to the boil and boil until reduced by just over half. Set aside to cool.

In a bowl, beat the butter with the sugar and lemon zest until white and creamy. Mix in the egg yolks, one at a time. Sift the flour and baking powder together over the mixture, then mix to combine.

Slowly add the orange and lemon juice and milk to the mixture, stirring to blend.

Now whisk the egg whites in another bowl until they form stiff peaks. Beat a third of the whisked egg whites into the runny sponge mixture, then carefully fold in the rest using a large spoon.

Stand the prepared dish in a roasting tin, then pour in the mixture. Pour boiling water around the dish to create a bain-marie and place in the oven.

Bake for 50–60 minutes until the pudding is golden brown and firm on top. Cover the dish with foil if the top browns too quickly.

Remove the dish from the oven and dust the pudding with icing sugar before serving.

Baked Alaska

The secret of this dessert is to bake it in the oven without the ice cream melting. However, using a cook's blowtorch rather than oven baking makes this dessert far easier to prepare. The trick is make sure you pipe plenty of meringue over the surface, then quickly go over it with a cook's blow torch. It's great served with either the raspberry sauce given here or a hot chocolate sauce (see page 42).

SERVES 6–8

1 quantity Italian meringue (see page 35)

FOR THE RASPBERRY SAUCE:

250g raspberries

2 tbsp icing sugar

FOR THE FILLING:

15cm disc of plain sponge

1–2 tbsp brandy

500ml vanilla ice cream

1 punnet strawberries, hulled and cut in halves or quarters

First, make the raspberry sauce by blending the raspberries and icing sugar with 25ml water in a mini food processor until smooth. Pass through a sieve.

Next, make up the Italian meringue following the instructions on page 35.

Place the sponge on a plate and drizzle with 1–2 tbsp brandy. Spoon the vanilla ice cream on top and the strawberries over and around the edge (save a few strawberries to decorate).

Spread the meringue all over using a palette knife to seal in the ingredients. Place the remainder of the meringue in a piping bag fitted with a star nozzle and pipe around the edge and on the top.

Using a cook's blowtorch, glaze the meringue to colour.

Garnish the baked Alaska with the remaining strawberries, drizzle with the raspberry sauce and dive in.

Hot chocolate fondants with summer berries and mint froth

The secret of a good hot chocolate fondant is the liquid centre. I've simplified the recipe by using bought chocolate truffles. If you want to make these for a dinner party, it's best to make them up, freeze them when raw and then flash them in the oven. Give them an extra 5 minutes cooking time when cooked from frozen. The mint froth is simply milk warmed in a pan with crème de menthe. All you need is the froth on the top of the milk.

SERVES 6

190g dark chocolate with at least 60% cocoa solids

100g butter, softened

35g ground almonds

2 large eggs, separated

35g cornflour

85g caster sugar

6 plain chocolate truffles (or use recipe on page 28)

strawberries, raspberries and blueberries, to decorate

FOR THE MINT FROTH:

150ml full-fat milk

1 tbsp crème de menthe

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4.

Finely grate 40g of the chocolate. Rub half the butter all over the inside of six tall dariole moulds (or similar containers). Dust well with the grated chocolate, shaking out any excess. Set aside on a baking tray.

Melt the remaining chocolate (including any shaken-out excess) and butter in a small heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water, or in a microwave-proof bowl in the microwave on full power for 2–3 minutes, stirring once. Do not overheat or the chocolate will 'seize', or turn solid. Scrape this mixture into a bigger bowl, then beat in the ground almonds, egg yolks and cornflour.

Whisk the egg whites in a separate bowl until they form stiff but not dry peaks. Gradually beat in the caster sugar – you may prefer to use a hand-held electric whisk for this.

Fold the meringue mixture into the melted chocolate mixture. Spoon half the combined mixture into the base of the mould, place a chocolate truffle on top, then fill each mould with the remaining mixture. Smooth the tops of the fondants.

Bake the fondants in the oven for 10–15 minutes until risen and slightly wobbly (they're best eaten as soon as they're cooked).

Bring the milk to a boil, remove from the heat, add the crème de menthe, then 'froth' with a hand blender. Turn the fondants out onto plates and serve with fresh berries and mint froth.

Shortbread

The secret of making good shortbread is to mix the doug as little as possible and to chill it after mixing as the hig content of butter will not allow you to roll it out straight away. I often find the best way to cook it is in a low oven so that it bakes without colouring too much. For citrus-flavoured shortbread (as used in the lemon curd syllabub on page 85), add the zest of 2 lemons or oranges in step

MAKES 16–20

225g chilled unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing

225g flour, plus extra for dusting

60g caster sugar, plus extra for dusting

pinch of salt

½ vanilla pod, seeds only

1 Dice the butter and put it into a mixing bowl to soften. Sift the flour on top with t caster sugar, a pinch of salt and the vanilla seeds. Rub together gently and form into a ball. Alternatively, blitz all the ingredients in a food processor until they co together into a ball.

2 Lightly flour the work surface, then roll out the shortbread mixture until it is abou 5mm thick. Prick all over the surface with a fork.

3 Using a sharp knife, cut the shortbread into fingers measuring about 5cm in len and about 1.5cm wide. Carefully lift onto a baking tray and rest in the fridge for 30 minutes or so.

4 Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Dust the shortbread with a little caster sugar before baking. Bake for 20 minutes, or until golden brown and firm the touch. Leave until completely cooled before removing from the baking tray.

Baked chocolate mousse with candied fennel root

Do try this recipe as I think it's one of the best in the book. This is for all the requests I get for a gluten-free cake. It's fab with fennel or ground nutmeg or just leave it plain, but it must be eaten at room temperature and never put in the fridge as it firms up too much. It will rise and then fall after coming out of the oven, but don't worry.

SERVES 6–8

½ fennel bulb, thinly sliced

300g dark bitter chocolate (minimum 60% cocoa fat)

150g unsalted butter

6 eggs, separated

50g caster sugar

150ml whipped double cream, to serve

FOR THE CANDIED FENNEL:

1 fennel bulb

100g caster sugar

100ml water

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Line the base and sides of a 20cm spring-bottomed cake tin with greaseproof paper and add the slices of fennel on to the base.

Melt the chocolate and butter in a metal bowl placed over a pan of simmering water.

Whisk the egg yolks with 2 tbsp of the sugar for 30 seconds. Stir in the melted chocolate and mix well.

Beat the egg whites with the remaining sugar until very stiff, then quickly fold one-third of the whites into the chocolate mix. Gently fold in the remainder and pour the mix into the cake tin.

Place on the middle shelf of the oven and bake for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool before serving.

To make the candied fennel root, slice the fennel bulb and add to a pan with the sugar and 100ml water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20–30 minutes and allow to cool.

Serve in a wedge with some of the fennel and juices and a spoonful of whipped cream.

Ginger and syrup cheesecake

There are two ways of making a cheesecake – the oven-baked American style with a sponge base, and the English style which is a set mixture with a biscuit base. This is a quick version of the English style, using cream cheese mixed with ginger and syrup (the syrup adds the sugar to the mixture), simply placed on a biscuit base. It's a really easy cheesecake that works well if you are short of time.

SERVES 2

4 digestive biscuits

15g butter, softened

300g full-fat cream cheese

4 pieces of ginger in syrup, 2 diced

3 tbsp grated dark chocolate

2 sugar twists, optional (see pages 32–33)

Crush the biscuits and mix with the softened butter. Place two 5cm metal rings on serving plates and fill with the crumb mixture to form the base of the cheesecake.

Place the cream cheese in a bowl with the diced ginger and about 4 tbsp of the syrup and mix well. Spoon the mixture into the rings and level the top.

Top each cheesecake with the grated chocolate. Slice the remaining ginger in half and arrange on the top of the cheesecakes.

Place a warm cloth around the rings to loosen the cheesecakes, or briefly warm with a blowtorch, and carefully lift the rings off. Garnish with a sugar twist and serve.

Classic lemon tart

For me, this is a true chef's pudding. Pastry chefs would always choose this from a restaurant menu as it sorts the men from the boys. It shows how far you dare go in getting the filling thick and the pastry thin, because if the tart splits during baking, you'll spend all day cleaning the oven! Use plenty of icing sugar on the glaze.

SERVES 8

10 eggs
380g caster sugar
500ml double cream
zest and juice of 8 lemons
butter, for greasing
225g sweet shortcrust pastry (see page 14)

TO SERVE:

100g mild goat's cheese
50ml double cream
2 tbsp icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
a little whipped cream

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6.

To make the filling, break the eggs into a bowl and whisk gently to break up the yolks. Add the sugar and continue to mix, then add the cream and the lemon juice, but not the zest. Pass the mixture through a sieve and leave to one side.

Butter a 20cm plain, loose-bottomed flan tin with softened butter and roll out the pastry between two wooden rulers (if you have some) to get a thin but even depth to the pastry. Carefully roll the pastry back onto the rolling pin, lift over the tin and roll the pastry back over the tin very loosely. If you don't leave plenty of slack, the pastry will rip or shrink too much when cooking. Tuck the pastry down the sides of the tin, pressing into the bottom edge well, but be careful not to tear or stretch the pastry. Don't trim the pastry.

Line the tart with a circle of greaseproof paper that is bigger than the tart and allows the paper to rise above the ring. Fill the tart with either baking beans, rice or ceramic baking beans. Bake for about 10 minutes.

Remove from the oven and remove the beans and greaseproof paper, then place back in the oven to colour the bottom of the tart. This should only take 3–4 minutes.

Turn the oven down to 100°C/225°F/Gas mark ¼. Pour in the lemon mix to reach the top of the tart and bake for about 1 hour until the tart is only just set. Remove from the oven and trim off the edges of the pastry. Leave to cool for about 1 hour.

To make the accompanying cream, mix the goat's cheese with the double cream and icing sugar.

To serve, dust the tart with plenty of icing sugar and grill under a hot grill to caramelize the top. Remove from the grill and cut into wedges and serve with a spoonful of the cream.

Truffle torte

Traditionally, a torte is a kind of tart made with a dough of nuts (usually almonds), with a criss-cross pattern on the top with the pastry. I have just given this recipe the title as I think it sounds so much nicer than chocolate tart.

SERVES 10

butter, for greasing
110g amaretti biscuits
450g dark chocolate (70–75% cocoa solids)
4 tbsp liquid glucose
4 tbsp rum
850ml double cream, at room temperature

TO SERVE:

cocoa powder, for dusting
single cream, chilled

Line a 23cm cake tin with baking parchment and grease the base and sides with soft butter.

Crush the biscuits and place over the base of the tin.

Break the chocolate into squares and put them in a heatproof bowl, with the liquid glucose and rum. Place the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure the base of the bowl doesn't touch the water, then leave it until the chocolate has melted and become quite smooth. Stir, then take off the heat and leave the mixture to cool slightly.

In a separate bowl beat the double cream until only very slightly thickened. Fold half into the chocolate mixture, then fold that mixture into the rest of the cream. When it is smoothly blended, spoon it into the prepared tin. Tap the tin gently to even the mixture out, cover with clingfilm and chill overnight.

Just before serving, run a warm knife round the edge to loosen the torte, then remove from the mould.

To serve, dust the surface with sifted cocoa powder and serve with single cream.

Profiteroles

I think of this dessert as comfort food for grown-ups. Try not to make the sauce too thick as it can spoil the whole dish – that's why I like to make it with sugar stock rather than double cream.

SERVES 4–6

FOR THE CHOUX PASTRY:

85g unsalted butter
4 tsp caster sugar
115g plain flour
pinch of salt
3 medium eggs, beaten

FOR THE CREAM FILLING:

600ml double cream
zest of 3 oranges

FOR THE CHOCOLATE SAUCE:

50g caster sugar
175g good-quality plain chocolate, broken into pieces

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6. Lightly oil a large baking tray.

To make the pastry, place the butter and sugar into a large pan with 200ml cold water. Place over a low heat to melt the butter, then increase the heat and shoot in the flour and salt all at once.

Remove from the heat and quickly beat the mixture vigorously until a smooth paste is formed, stirring continuously to dry out the paste. When the paste curls away from the side of the pan, transfer the mixture into a large bowl and leave to cool for 10–15 minutes.

When cool, beat in the eggs a little at a time until the paste is smooth and glossy. You may not need to add all the egg – continue adding just until you have a soft dropping consistency. The mixture will be shiny and smooth and fall from a spoon if given a sharp tap.

Dip a teaspoon into some warm water and lift out a spoon of the profiterole mixture. Rub the top of the mixture with a wet finger to get rid of any bumps and spoon onto the baking tray.

Place in the oven and before closing the door, throw in half a cup of water into the bottom of the oven and shut the door quickly. This will make more steam in the oven and make the choux pastry rise better. Bake for 25–30 minutes, until golden brown (if too pale they will become soggy when cool).

Remove from the oven and prick the base of each profiterole. Place on the baking tray with the hole facing upwards and return to the oven for 5 minutes where the warm air helps to dry out the centres.

To make the filling, lightly whip the cream with the zest until soft peaks form. Do not over-whip. When the profiteroles are cold, using a piping bag with a plain 5mm nozzle, pipe the cream into the holes of the profiteroles.

To make the chocolate sauce, melt the chocolate in a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Put the sugar in a small pan with 100ml water and bring to the boil. Stir the melted chocolate, then add the water and sugar mixture and stir until smooth and shiny. Arrange the buns on a serving dish and pour over the hot sauce. Eat hot or cold.

Baked chocolate and orange cheesecake

This is a classic American way of making a cheesecake (the British version usually has a biscuit base and is set, whereas this has sponge and is baked). Cheesecakes are one of the oldest recorded desserts and they are said to have been served at the first Olympic games in 776BC, though I bet they didn't taste like this.

SERVES 8–10

butter, for greasing
23cm sponge (cut from a large bought flan case)
3 tbsp Grand Marnier
200g caster sugar
zest of 2 oranges
juice of 1 orange
4 tbsp cornflour
850g full-fat soft cream cheese
3 medium eggs
1 vanilla pod
375ml double cream, plus extra for serving
36 dark chocolate pieces

FOR THE MARBLED CHOCOLATE:

150g white chocolate
150g dark chocolate

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Butter a 23cm springform cake tin.

Cut the sponge horizontally into two discs. Use one to line the cake tin. Drizzle with 1 tbsp Grand Marnier.

Mix together the sugar, orange zest and juice and cornflour in a bowl using a wooden spoon, then use an electric hand mixer to beat in the cream cheese. Add the eggs one by one, beating constantly until all the eggs are well incorporated.

Slice open the vanilla pod, remove the seeds with a sharp knife and place the seeds into the cream mixture, add 2 tbsp of Grand Marnier, if using, and mix everything together well. Add the cream and beat well until the mixture is smooth.

Pour one-third of the mixture gently over the sponge base in the cake tin. Top with a third of the chocolate pieces and smooth over with a stepped palette knife. Repeat twice more.

Sit the tin in a baking tray filled with 2–3mm of warm water to help create steam during cooking. Place in the oven and bake for 50 minutes until the top is golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool and set completely before removing from the tin.

Meanwhile, melt the white and dark chocolate separately in bowls over simmering water. Cover a baking tray tightly in cling film. Pour the dark chocolate and the white chocolate onto the tray. Using your finger, swirl the two chocolates together to create a marble effect. Chill to set.

Serve the cheesecake cut into wedges, with a piece of the marbled chocolate and a drizzle of cream.

Clotted cream summer pudding

Summer pudding brings back both good and bad memories of my childhood cooking – the good memory is of the taste and the bad one of cleaning the bottom of the fridge after it had leaked everywhere. Thankfully this recipe, made in individual moulds, solves that problem.

SERVES 4

400g mixed frozen fruits, defrosted

50g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting

10 slices white bread

1 small tub clotted cream

1 punnet each of strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and redcurrants

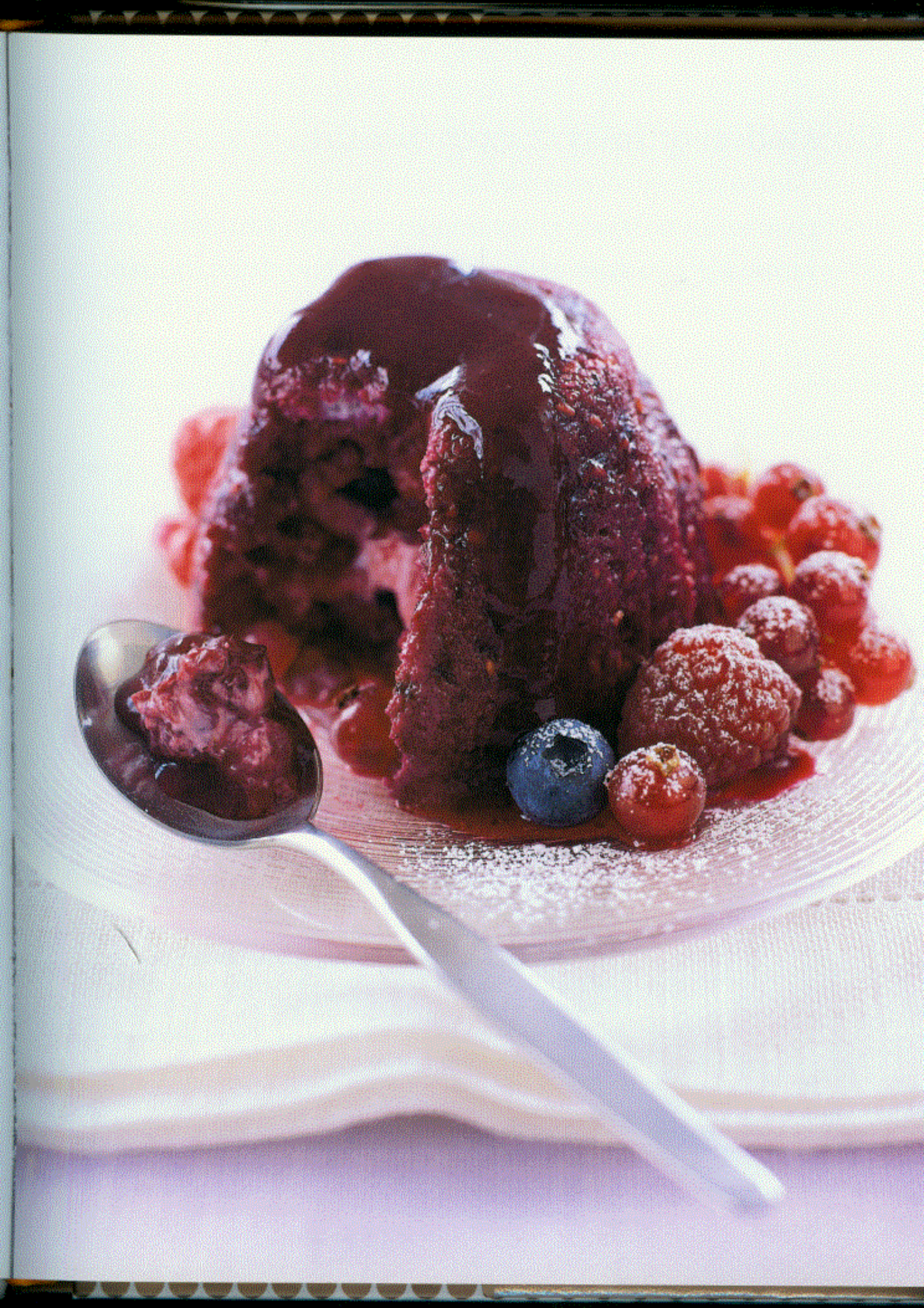
Place half the frozen fruit in a blender and whiz to purée the fruit well. Add some sugar to taste.

Line four small moulds or small pudding basins with clingfilm. Remove the crusts from the bread and cut circles to fit the base of the moulds. Dip one side of the bread circles into the puréed fruit and use to line the base of the basin, dipped side facing out. Line the sides of the moulds with more dipped bread, dipped-side out.

Half-fill the centre of each mould with some of the defrosted fruit, then add a teaspoon of clotted cream. Top with the remaining defrosted fruit and some of the juices, then top with another circle of dipped bread.

Chill the puddings in the fridge for at least 30 minutes before serving.

To serve, tip the puddings out from the moulds onto serving plates. Pour over the remaining puréed sauce, scatter the fruit around the pudding and dust with icing sugar.



Pumpkin pie

Some people frown when they think of using veg in sweet dishes, but many vegetables work particularly well in desserts, such as butternut squash in ice cream, carrots in a carrot cake (see page 151), fennel with chocolate (see page 90), so why not pumpkin in a pie?

SERVES 8

FOR THE PASTRY:

175g plain flour, plus extra for rolling out

10g icing sugar

pinch of salt

75g butter, softened

40g pecans, roughly blitzed in a food processor

1 large egg yolk

1 egg white, lightly beaten

FOR THE FILLING:

450g (prepared weight) pumpkin flesh, cut into 2.5cm chunks

2 large eggs, plus 1 large yolk

1 tbsp molasses

75g soft dark brown sugar

1 tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp freshly ground nutmeg

½ tsp ground allspice

½ tsp ground cloves

½ tsp ground ginger

275ml double cream

For the pastry, sift the flour, icing sugar and salt into a large bowl. Add the butter and, using your fingertips, gently rub it into the flour. When the mixture is crumbly, add the chopped nuts, then sprinkle in 1–2 tbsp water and the egg yolk. Bring the pastry together (you may need to add more water) to make a smooth dough that will leave the bowl clean. Rest in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Cook the pumpkin in a steamer for 15–20 minutes, or until tender. Transfer to a blender and roughly purée.

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Lightly grease a 23cm, 4cm deep, loose-bottomed fluted tart tin.

Remove the pastry from the fridge and roll out on a floured surface. Transfer it, rolling it over the pin, to the tin. Press lightly all over the base and sides of the tin, easing any overlapping pastry back down the sides. Trim, leaving 5mm above the rim of the tin.

Prick the base all over with a fork and brush the pastry with the reserved egg white. Bake on a baking tray for 20–25 minutes until crisp and golden. (Check after 10 minutes – if the pastry has risen in the centre, prick it a few times and press it down again.)

For the filling, lightly whisk the eggs and extra yolk together in a large bowl. Place the molasses into a saucepan and heat gently. Add the sugar, spices and cream, then bring it up to simmering point, giving it a whisk to mix everything together. Pour it over the eggs and whisk again briefly. Add the pumpkin purée, still whisking to combine, then pour the filling into a jug.

When the pastry case is ready, remove it from the oven. Pour half the filling in, return the tart to the oven and, with the oven shelf half out, pour in the rest of the filling. Slide the shelf back in. Bake the pie for 35–40 minutes, or until puffed up round the edges but still slightly wobbly in the centre. Place the tin on a wire cooling rack. Serve chilled with crème fraîche.

Baked pear and honey tart

This tart is great served whole for a dinner party. The trick is not to put too much liquid in when cooking the pears as this will cause the tart to fall apart when portioned up. The cinnamon sauce on page 42 is fab with this.

SERVES 4–6

400g sweet shortcrust pastry (see page 14)

8 pears

caster sugar, to taste

20g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing

4 medium egg yolks

1 medium whole egg

1 tbsp clear honey

600ml double cream

whipped cream, for serving

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Lightly grease a 24cm loose-bottomed tart tin.

Roll out the pastry into a circle 3mm thick and slightly wider than the tin. Line the tin, gently easing the pastry down into the corners. Leave 2.5cm pastry overhanging the edge. Chill for 10 minutes.

Line the pastry case with greaseproof paper and fill with dried beans, rice or flour. Put the tin onto a baking tray and bake for about 10 minutes. Remove the paper with the beans and bake the pastry case for a further 5 minutes, so that the pastry no longer looks glassy. Trim off the overhanging pastry edge level with the top of the tin.

Reduce the oven temperature to 170°C/325°F/Gas mark 3.

Peel, core and roughly slice six of the pears, Place in a pan with 1 tbsp water. Cook over a medium heat for 5–10 minutes, until soft. Sweeten with sugar to taste. Drain through a sieve to remove any excess liquid, then beat to a purée.

Peel and core the remaining two pears, and cut it into neat 6mm slices. Fry gently in the unsalted butter until softened and lightly coloured. Place the pear purée in the bottom of the pastry case and overlap the pear slices on top.

In a bowl, beat together the egg yolks, whole egg and honey, then whisk the double cream into the egg mix. Pour into the pastry case, over the pears, and bake for 30 minutes, until the mixture has set and is golden brown. Serve in slices with a dollop of cream.

Chocolate fudge cake

Chocolate fudge cake is the recipe for the chocoholic in everyone. It's rich, dark and, sadly, one of those cakes where after eating one slice, you just want another – a bit like a packet of chocolate digestives, or is that just me?

SERVES 6–8

FOR THE CAKE:

175g very soft butter, plus extra for greasing

175g self-raising wholemeal flour

1 rounded tbsp cocoa powder

1 rounded tsp baking powder

175g light soft brown sugar

3 large eggs, at room temperature

FOR THE FILLING AND TOPPING:

125g light soft brown sugar

170g tin of evaporated milk

125g dark chocolate (50–55% cocoa solids), broken into small pieces

50g butter, softened

2 drops vanilla extract

TO DECORATE:

flaked almonds

cocoa powder or icing sugar, for dusting

Pre-heat the oven to 170°C/325°F/Gas mark 3. Lightly grease a 20cm springform cake tin and line the base with baking parchment.

Weigh the flour, then take out 1 rounded tbsp and replace it with the rounded tbsp of cocoa. (The tablespoon of flour you remove won't be needed.)

Add the baking powder to the flour and cocoa, tip into a bowl, add the remaining cake ingredients and beat them together. You will end up with a mixture that drops off a spoon when you give it a whack on the side of the bowl. If the mixture seems a little too stiff, add a little water and mix again.

Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared tin and bake on the centre shelf of the oven for about 40–45 minutes or until springy in the centre. Remove from the oven and, after about 30 seconds, turn the cake out onto a wire cooling rack and strip off the base papers. Once cool, carefully cut the cake in half horizontally and set aside.

For the filling, combine the sugar and evaporated milk in a heavy saucepan. Heat gently to dissolve the sugar, stirring frequently. When the sugar has dissolved and the mixture comes to the boil, keep the heat very low and simmer for 6 minutes without stirring. Remove the pan from the heat and, using a small balloon whisk, whisk in the chocolate, followed by the butter and vanilla essence.

Transfer the mixture to a bowl and, when it is cool, cover it with clingfilm and chill for about 1 hour to allow the mixture to thicken. Then beat again and spread half on one sponge, placing the other sponge on top. Spread the remainder over the top and sides. Decorate the top with the almonds and dust with cocoa powder or icing sugar to serve.

Carrot cake

The idea of decorating the cake in this way comes from a French method of cooking carrots. Boil them quickly so they cook in the evaporating water, leaving a buttery, sugary glaze in the pan to swirl the cooked carrots in.

SERVES 8

FOR THE CAKE:

200g carrots, peeled and coarsely grated
175g dark soft brown sugar
2 large eggs
150ml olive oil (not virgin olive oil)
200g wholemeal self-raising flour
1 tbsp ground mixed spice
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
80g pecans, roughly chopped
grated zest of 1 lemon
110g sultanas
25g raisins
50g desiccated coconut

FOR THE ICING:

250g mascarpone
250ml double cream
2 tbsp icing sugar

FOR THE CARROT DECORATION:

300g baby carrots (washed)
1 tsp salt
70g sugar
50g butter

FOR THE BANANA TUILES:

1 ripe banana, peeled and roughly chopped
1 medium egg white

TO DECORATE:

pulled sugar (see pages 32–33)

Pre-heat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas mark 5. Lightly grease a 25cm, 6cm deep cake tin and line the base with baking parchment.

To make the cake, whisk the sugar, eggs and oil together in a bowl with an electric hand whisk for 3–4 minutes until smooth. Now sift the flour, mixed spice and bicarbonate of soda into the bowl, tipping in any bits left in the sieve. Stir together gently, then add the remaining cake ingredients.

Pour the cake mixture evenly into the tin and bake on the centre shelf of the oven for 35–40 minutes. It should be nicely risen and feel firm and springy to the touch when lightly pressed in the centre. If not, give it another few minutes and test again. Remove the cake from the tin and cool on a wire rack.

Make the icing by mixing all the ingredients together in a bowl until light and fluffy. Cover with clingfilm and leave in the fridge until you are ready to ice the cake.

To make the glazed carrots, trim the green carrot stalks to 2.5cm in length. Place the carrots in a saucepan and just cover with cold water. Add the salt, sugar and butter, bring to the boil and boil quickly for 5–6 minutes. The carrots will cook as the water evaporates, and a glaze is formed in the bottom of the pan. Coat in the glaze, remove from the pan and leave to cool.

To make the banana tuiles, purée the banana in a mini blender, add the egg white and whiz together. Spread the batter onto silicone paper on a baking tray in a very thin layer in the desired shapes (see page 22 for template instructions). Bake in the oven at 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4 for 20–30 minutes until brown. Remove the tuiles from the tray while still hot and leave to cool.

To decorate, spread the icing roughly over the top of the cake. Garnish the top with the banana tuiles, sugared carrots and lengths of pulled sugar.

Chocolate cola cake

Everyone who knows me knows I am sucker for drinking diet cola and snacking on chocolate bars. This recipe sounds odd but it tastes great and is so moist when cooked – I love it. If you prefer a thicker frosting, double the quantities for the topping.

SERVES 8

250g butter, plus extra for greasing
250g self-raising flour
300g golden caster sugar
3 heaped tbsp cocoa
generous pinch of bicarbonate of soda
200ml cola drink
75ml milk
2 eggs, beaten
1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE TOPPING:

60g butter, softened
200g icing sugar, sifted
2–3 tbsp cocoa
2 tbsp cola drink

FOR THE SAUCE:

king-sized caramel chocolate bar
splash of double cream
2 tbsp mini marshmallows (optional)

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Grease a 24cm loose-bottomed cake tin.

Sift the flour, sugar, cocoa and bicarbonate of soda into a bowl. Gently melt the butter and cola drink together in a pan, then add to the dry ingredients, together with the milk, eggs and vanilla extract. Mix gently but thoroughly, then tip into the cake tin.

Bake for about 40 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Remove from the oven and leave to cool on a wire rack for about 15 minutes while you make the topping.

To make the topping, beat the butter, icing sugar and cocoa together in a bowl until blended. Beat in the cola to combine. Spread over the cake and allow the topping to set.

To make the sauce, melt the chocolate bar gently in a pan with a splash of cream (you may want to add a little warm water to achieve a pouring consistency), then stir in the marshmallows if using. The sauce is rich and sweet, as is the topping, so you may want to serve with one or the other rather than both.

Macadamia nut chocolate cake

I don't know why macadamia nuts aren't as popular as they should be – most people seem to opt for a combination of chocolate and hazelnut. These individual cakes must be served warm as they become more like a muffin when eaten cold. If necessary, give them a quick blast in the microwave for 10 seconds to bring them back to full glory.

SERVES 6

75g toasted macadamia nuts
190g unsalted butter
200g sugar
4 eggs
45g unsweetened cocoa, sifted
70g plain flour
¼ tsp baking powder

FOR THE CHOCOLATE SAUCE:

25g bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1 tbsp unsalted butter
4 tbsp double cream
15g sugar

TO SERVE:

coconut ice cream (see page 179)

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Butter 6 ring moulds 5cm wide by 2.5cm deep. Place on a parchment-lined baking tray.

Finely grind half the macadamia nuts and coarsely chop the remaining half.

Cream the butter and sugar together and add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Add the cocoa, flour and baking powder and stir until fully incorporated. Gently fold the ground nuts into the batter.

Fill the moulds two-thirds full with the batter and sprinkle with the chopped macadamia nuts.

Bake for 15–20 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

To make the sauce, gently heat the chocolate and butter in a saucepan until melted, stir in the cream and sugar and continue to heat gently, stirring, until combined.

To serve, pour a pool of chocolate sauce onto each plate. Place a cake in the centre of each plate on top of the sauce. Spoon the ice cream to the side.

Chocolate chip cookies

I call this 'pastry chef's chewing gum' as I used to eat masses of this raw dough while working – strange, I know! I used to mould the soft mixture into balls and place them on a baking tray to firm up in the fridge, then once cold pile into a container and store in the fridge for up to a week. Whenever you want fresh cookies, take a ball, place onto the tray and bake.

MAKES 30

110g butter, softened
110g light muscovado sugar
1 vanilla pod, seeds only
1 medium egg, lightly beaten
75g plain wholemeal flour
110g dark chocolate chips
50g toasted hazelnuts, chopped

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Line two 28 x 35cm baking trays with baking parchment.

Place the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl and beat together with an electric hand whisk until light and fluffy.

Split the vanilla pod lengthways. Using the end of a teaspoon or a small sharp knife, scoop out the seeds. Beat the egg and the vanilla seeds into the mixture, then add the remaining ingredients and stir until thoroughly mixed.

Take spoonfuls of the dough (about the size of a walnut) and arrange them on the baking trays, spaced well apart.

Bake them on the shelf just above the centre of the oven for 10 minutes or until the cookies have turned a golden colour and feel firm in the centre when lightly pressed.

As soon as the cookies are baked, remove then from the baking sheets using a palette knife. Cool them on a wire rack and, when cold, store in an airtight container.

Apple and toffee muffins

Don't put too much toffee in each of the muffins or it will boil over during baking. For a different flavour, try using nutmeg instead of cinnamon. These muffins also make a great pudding when served with vanilla ice cream.

MAKES 12

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 80g caster sugar
- 240ml milk
- 100g butter, melted
- 300g plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- good pinch of cinnamon
- 2 eating apples, such as Cox's or Granny Smiths, peeled, cored and finely chopped
- 50g toffee, broken into small pieces

Pre-heat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas mark 5. Line a 12-hole bun or muffin tin with paper cases.

Mix the eggs, sugar, milk and melted butter in a large bowl. Sift in the flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Add the chopped apple and mix roughly.

Spoon the mixture into the muffin cases, filling them a quarter full, then top with a few pieces of toffee, and cover with the rest of the muffin mixture until the paper cases are half full.

Bake in the oven for 30–35 minutes until well risen and golden. Cool on a wire rack.

Brown bread ice cream

Who would have thought that brown bread in desserts would add so much flavour, yet it's the bread that makes this ice cream taste so good.

SERVES 4–6

175g brown wholemeal breadcrumbs
300ml double cream
300ml single cream
125g icing sugar
2 egg yolks
1 tbsp rum (optional)
2 egg whites

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6.

Spread the breadcrumbs out on a baking tray and toast in the oven for a couple of minutes until crisp and slightly browned.

Meanwhile, beat the two creams with the sugar. Mix together the yolks and rum, if using, and add to the cream mixture, beating it in well.

When the breadcrumbs are cool, fold them gently into the cream mixture, making sure they are evenly distributed.

Lastly, whip the whites of the eggs until stiff and fold into the mixture. Transfer to a sealable container, place in the freezer and store until needed. (There is no need to stir this ice cream while it freezes.)

of my favourite ice creams. It's smooth and tastes so good either on its own, with fruit or served simply with chocolate sauce. Make sure you use good-quality white chocolate and not standard sweet bars of white chocolate as these are full of other ingredients which will cause the mixture to go grainy in texture when churned.

SERVES 6–8

12 egg yolks
200g caster sugar
600ml milk
250g white chocolate, chopped
600ml double cream

Whisk the egg yolks and caster sugar together in a bowl until pale and fluffy.

Bring the milk up to the boil in a pan.

Place the chocolate into a large bowl and leave to one side.

Pour the hot milk onto the egg yolks and whisk together. Return the pan and heat, stirring all the time until the mixture thickens.

Pass the hot mixture through a sieve onto the chocolate and allow to cool.

Mix in the cream and place in an ice-cream machine and churn until set. Transfer to a sealable container, place in the freezer and store until needed.

Chocolate ganache

This is a basic ganache to which you can add different flavourings, such as rum, brandy, yuzu (see page 60) or maccha (a strong, powdered Japanese green tea – use 1 tsp, and don't be tempted to substitute leaf tea). If you add more chocolate, the mix will become firmer when cold. You can either shape the ganache into truffles, or use it as a chocolate filling for cakes and desserts (this recipe makes enough to fill and top a 30cm cake).

MAKES 36 TRUFFLES

275g dark chocolate, minimum 60% cocoa solids, broken into pieces

50g unsalted butter, at room temperature

250ml double cream

4 tbsp rum (if making truffles)

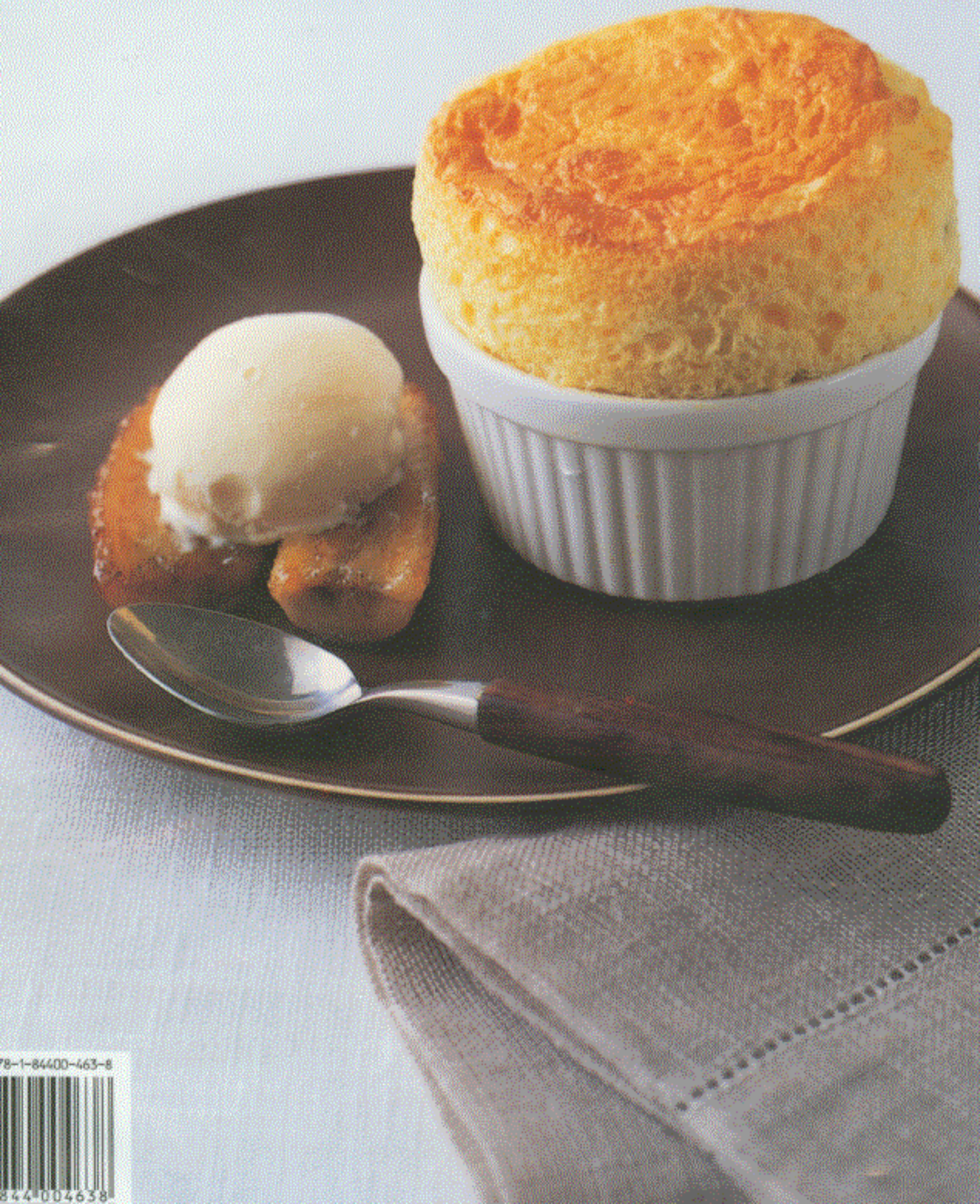
50g cocoa powder (if making truffles)

1 Place the chocolate and butter in a large bowl. Bring the cream to the boil and pour it over the chocolate and butter. Stir gently until the chocolate has melted, trying not to create bubbles. If making truffles, stir in the rum.

2 Place the bowl of ganache in the fridge to firm up, removing it about 15 minutes before you want to use it.

3 If making truffles, put the cocoa into a bowl. Ensure your hands are cold and dry, then dust them with cocoa. Take spoonfuls of the ganache mixture (use a teaspoon or a tablespoon) and roll the mixture into a ball in your cocoa-dusted hands. Drop each truffle into the bowl of cocoa, turn it around and then toss it between your palms to remove any excess powder. The truffles can be returned to the fridge and kept for up to 2 days as long as they are stored in an airtight container.

Over 100 recipes from the new BBC 'Face of Food'



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